

Jackson (Saml.)

MEDICAL EDUCATION:

THE

ANNUAL DISCOURSE

BEFORE THE

Philadelphia County Medical Society.

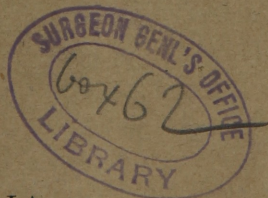
Delivered December 29, 1852.

BY THE PRESIDENT,

SAMUEL JACKSON, M.D.,

FORMERLY OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

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PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.  
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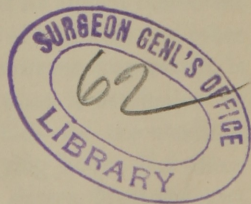
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*Resolved*, That a Committee be appointed to request of Dr. S. JACKSON a copy of the Address delivered by him on retiring from the office of President of the Society, and to have the same published."

*Committee*—Drs. CONDIE, WARRINGTON, and NORRIS.

Extract from the minutes of a stated meeting of the Philadelphia County Medical Society, April 20, 1853.

D. FRANCIS CONDIE,

*Secretary.*



## THE ANNUAL DISCOURSE.

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*Gentlemen:* Medical education has become one of the most important subjects that can exercise the contemplative mind. The physician plays an important part in society; his example is apt to be followed for good or for evil; his countenance may often encourage the good and frown away the bad; in his merits there is hope; all men, whether savage or civilized, cling to physicians in pain, sickness, or death—hence their number and importance wherever mankind are found.

It is calculated that there are now forty thousand physicians in these States, all occupied, day and night, in saving or in destroying their neighbors; all busy for good or for evil, according to the quantum of their brightness, intelligence, and moral courage. Upon these men depends the life or death of vast multitudes, and hence the temporal happiness or misery of countless numbers. Our Congress have made, or have talked about making, some vigorous laws for the preservation of travellers by land and by water; but for that greater number of their charge who remain at home, exposed to the dangers of medical quackery, our government has made no provision; how important is it then, that the collective medical body should take care, that its annual increment be thoroughly educated! The establishment of hospitals and other asylums for the relief of human misery, however imperative, is prolific of little good, in comparison with what is attainable by the cultivation of the collective medical mind—for the blessings which temporal relief afford end with the dying body; but those brought forth by the culture of the twin sisters, Medicine and Philanthropy, may be transmitted, with something like a geometrical increment of expansion and energy, through each succeed-

ing generation. How comparatively small would be the amount of good now done by the Pennsylvania Hospital, had science and humanity not made any progress the last hundred years! It is true, that in the general advancement, there may be times of temporary failure and even of backsliding, as when Broussais put out our lights and then stalked abroad a jack-with-the-lantern; but we must not therefore abandon calculation on natural causes—the farmer does not hesitate to sow though the frost or drought may disappoint his hopes; nor does the young man fail to provide for a long life, though he sees the young men daily falling around him.

In treating this subject, I shall not venture on any metaphysical speculations concerning the capacities and powers of the mind, nor shall I avail myself of the masses that have been written during the last few years on the present topic; I shall not attempt to show what wonders are said to be achieved in the schools of Europe, nor yet spread before you in the present fashionable manner, the reputed dishonors of our own country; but merely endeavor to give you my own thoughts on some points which have been left almost untouched, hoping they may, at some future time, spring up in your minds and produce some salutary excogitations far better than my own, as seed carried to a richer soil will produce seed better than itself. The subject in all its relations is a very extensive one, I can therefore touch some inconsecutive parts only; nor can I argue these fully and categorically in a single discourse. I will merely throw out some little *hints* on some neglected points; but little as they are, I am convinced they may be made useful, and I shall therefore beg your attention thereto—I will burn a mere farthing candle in your presence; and I pray you, don't—don't say *poh!* and thus blow out my little flickering taper, but rather light your own lamps thereby, and you will see more clearly than I do, and be able to walk with a secure and majestic step, where I shall be seen perhaps tottering to my fall.

In the first place let us consider at what age medical education ought to begin. All phrenologists agree, that youth is the time most favorable for developing the faculties both of body and mind, in order to obtain the utmost power and the various adaptations of which they are capable. This principle we shall keep in view and shall carry it out, as far as ability and circumstances may permit.



But there is so much of education that must precede all medical studies, that the student must be restrained some years which might be profitably spent in acquiring the elementary branches of his future profession. Let us then propose the beginning of his sixteenth year for the beginning of his medical education. What, say you, his sixteenth year when he has not gone through his college studies? Now this question brings up one point to which I would gladly direct your attention.

A boy, who is early destined to receive a good education, may be exuberantly prepared to enter college the beginning of his fourteenth year, and entered at this age, he may have gone through the Freshman and Sophomore classes by the end of his fifteenth year; when, we must contend, though not without respect for the judgment of others, he has acquired all that is necessary to fit him for the study of medicine. He has now made considerable progress in algebra and geometry; he has learned plain and spherical trigonometry, with their application to surveying, navigation, and other practical branches. In addition to all the Latin and Greek that he read at the grammar school, he has read in Cicero, Horace, and Livy; in Xenophon, Homer, and Demosthenes. He has studied ancient and modern history, with ancient and modern geography; logic, rhetoric, and English composition; chemistry, and the elements of mechanics.

But you may reply, that our sophomore's mind has not been trained in the expanding and corroborating studies of the junior and senior classes. These are—moral and intellectual philosophy; the higher geometry; differential and integral calculus; the doctrines of equilibrium and motion; machinery, heat, electricity and magnetism; optics and acoustics; astronomy and physical geography; constitutional law and elements of polity; Juvenal and Tacitus; Plato, Aristotle, and some Greek tragedies.

Now I contend that these things, however useful and desirable to some, are not necessary preliminaries to the study of medicine, and that to some students, they would be a positive injury. They are taught in large classes, and it is a well-known fact, that only a minor portion of the students understand their lessons; the greater portion come out mere sciolists, with minds depraved by hearing daily what they do not comprehend. Instead of these higher branches, let our sophomore apply to medicine, if that be

his destiny, and this, in conjunction with those refreshing studies and readings which every physician must use in his progress through life, will prove as propitious to mental discipline, as anything he will find in college during the junior and senior years. They will carry with them this animating principle, that they pertain to the daily transactions of all his future life; as Bacon says, "they will come home to his business and bosom." So when Aristippus was asked what he would teach a boy, he answered: "those things which he will use when he becomes a man."

Many extravagant catalogues of preparatory studies have been issued by eminent physicians during the last few years; they contain much that is not necessary, and much that can be learned far better in subsequent years, being used as instructive amusements in leisure or weariness. Poetry, the philosophy of history, metaphysics, and civil polity, are not studies appropriate to this early period of life.

An eminent physician published an oration some years ago, in which he says: "I regard it as a desideratum, that a *general idea* of these various departments of knowledge, Latin, Greek, French, German, Italian, history, voyages and travels, and the classical writers of modern times, should be obtained, as a positive preliminary." Now what does he mean by "*a general idea*" of these languages, to say nothing of all the rest? He must mean a superficial knowledge hastily acquired. But to learn anything superficially and hastily, so as to have this *general idea*, is the worst advice that could be given to a young man. Begin life with hastily acquiring *general ideas* of many things, and you will never know anything correctly. You seem to know much till you come to talk, write, or act; and then, behold, you know nothing. You have, moreover, acquired a rambling habit of transitory study that now is the ruin of your mental operations. Let the young man study a few things correctly and thoroughly, and thus acquire a confirmed habit of mental discipline.

We hear much boastful talk about languages, and the necessity of them, all which I long ago learned to receive with many grains of salt. Even Sir Wm. Jones was made to impose upon the world most shamefully; for, since his death, it has been found that he was very deficient in much that he was said to know. French, as the language of science, and the Italian, as the *soavissima favella*



of poetry and romance, it would be well to learn, provided they could be attained by conversation principally; but by the time our student has waded through the broad and difficult streams from Greece and Rome, having reached the shore with a bundle of grammars and dictionaries on his back, he has become excessively weary of his burden. It is moreover a fact, that no one can learn thoroughly a living tongue unless conversation enter largely into his teaching. Latin contributes greatly to the learning of French and Italian; our English assists much in the learning of French; but in German the student will find himself in a new world, wherein neither his ancient nor his modern languages will afford much help. If our young scholar has talent and industry, with sufficient opportunities of conversation, he may learn to converse in French and Italian before he enter college; for, contrary to the general maxim of Horace, children learn languages faster through the ears than the eyes.

One of our most eminent physicians has published his opinion that the modern tongues are more important in medicine than the ancient; from which opinion I would beg leave to dissent. Latin and Greek have been the languages of science, and particularly of medicine, for 2000 years; nearly all technical terms have been derived from them; many of these are paraphrastical, implicating the declension of nouns, adjectives, and participles, which cannot be pronounced with confidence or certainty, particularly in the plural number and oblique case, without some knowledge of the ancient tongues. How often do we hear physicians using Latin adjectives in the wrong gender, thus making the same blunder the Yorkshire man does, when he speaks of his wife as of the masculine gender, *he* and *him*! A knowledge of Latin, moreover, is so intertwined with the prejudices of mankind respecting physicians, that any one who is ignorant thereof will almost certainly be inculpated by strangers as equally ignorant of everything else.

But for the future physician to spend much time in learning languages is like an artist who wastes his life in preparing his working apparatus. Nearly every valuable foreign book is quickly translated, or its quintessence is soon circulated by the journals; hence a knowledge of the language is absolutely necessary to the professed medical *literatus* only; nearly all others may find their time fully occupied by English books, and their wounded deficiency

may be healed by reflecting, with the great Lexicographer, that "*words* are the daughters of the earth, while *things* are the sons of heaven." They have, moreover, the great book of nature before them, to be studied both day and night more than all other books beside. It is always present when most needed; if you have patients on hand who are dangerously ill, this precious book is continually open before you; it accompanies you in your solitary walks; it is present in your study, in your chamber, and in your sleepless beds. A book, too, the physician must write for himself, to which he may add some thoughts and facts for future use nearly every day of his medical life.\*

The various branches of natural history constitute another department of preparatory knowledge, now strongly recommended. I would propose to reject them all except botany and a moderate portion of geology. These are nearly related to medicine; but all the rest, however attractive and ornamental, ought to be rejected, as having no relation to the cure of diseases, except so far as the professors of anatomy and physiology will occasionally unfold. *Life is short, the art is long*, are the first words of Hippocrates's Aphorisms; if this was true in his time, what shall we say in the present day? Has life been lengthened, or the art been shortened, or the mind endowed with additional powers?

So much, then, for those who have been favored with early education, whether in colleges or in other institutions; but there are many young men who have not been well educated, but who are yet desirous, at the age of sixteen or more years, to become students of medicine. If these seem to have an irresistible inspiration for the profession, let them give some decisive proofs thereof by their life and conversation. If they have the necessary mental powers, if they love mankind and find their greatest comfort in relieving human suffering, they may yet become useful, even eminent physicians; and if their talents are superior, they may become an honor to themselves and their country. In the first place, they must go to school, in order to acquire that learning without which they cannot proceed in medicine; or, if the force of genius should drive them through, they cannot be respectable in the society wherein their ambition would wish to shine. The American

\* "*Condo et compono quæ mox depromere possim.*"—*Horat.*



Medical Association has fixed the quantum of preparatory knowledge at the lowest grade to which, as such a body, they could possibly descend with decency. "A good English education; a knowledge of natural philosophy, and the elementary mathematical sciences; and such an acquaintance with Latin and Greek as will enable them to appreciate\* the technical language of medicine, and to read and write prescriptions."

Now, a young man of talents and industry, who has determined to throw his whole energy into the acquisition of knowledge, may learn all this thoroughly in two years; for what does it all comprehend? The necessary smattering of natural philosophy may soon be learned, particularly as the student will quickly be farther instructed therein by the professor of chemistry; in mathematics, I presume nothing more is required by the Association than arithmetic, the first six books of Euclid, with algebra through quadratic equations; he may have learned to read the Greek Gospels, and the Septuagint, that easy natural dialect, with some help from the dictionary; he may have acquired as much Latin as would enable him to read the beautiful story of Withington and his cat, to construe Cæsar and Virgil, to write prescriptions grammatically, and to pronounce with confidence the paraphrastical technology of medicine; he will be able to say *massa carnea Jacobi Silvii* without fear and trembling for number, gender, and case; and he will be able to tell the great American Medical Association that their phrase, "*to appreciate the technical language of medicine*," means what they did not intend. This apparatus of learning, small indeed, is all that the Association requires; and the man who cannot learn all this thoroughly in his sixteenth and seventeenth years, is evidently not worth patronizing as a student of the Hippocratic art. Those men who began late, and yet became eminent, would have thought this a very easy task.

But even this amount was vehemently opposed in the Convention, and one active member—I am glad that his name is unknown to me—averred, that it transcended the acquirements of the Baccalaureates in our American colleges. Shame on such ignorance or misrepresentation. The student must know the most of this, and

\* That is, *to set a price* on the language of medicine. Is this what they wished to say?

in the languages ten times more, before he can be admitted to the college halls, and then he must spend four years within them before he can graduate. Now, when we consider how the acquirements of yesterday facilitate the studies of to-day, and how the easiness of acquiring goes on increasing with the acquirements in something like a geometrical ratio, what must be the quantum of the worthy Baccalaureate's knowledge, compared with that little circle prescribed by the Convention? And here I have not forgotten what was said a few pages back, that some students in the higher classes will often come out with confused and muddled learning; but this related to the study of the higher mathematics, where the solving of a problem depends on the intelligent solution of all that have gone before it.

It was vehemently objected in the Convention, that many deserving young men have not the necessary opportunities of instruction. This may sometimes happen, but merely as an exception to the general rule; for a highly-gifted man will often find friends, some minister of the parish, or some retired lawyer, who will direct him in his studies; and almost every village is furnished with some *Ichabod Crane* from beyond the Hudson. The student will no doubt find many difficulties, but in the present case he is supposed to be a superior man, who will not be stopped by common impediments. He has prepared his mind for these, and they will merely add fuel to the inextinguishable flame that burns within him. As Hannibal broke down the Alps, not by elemental but rather by intellectual fire, and opened his way to the regions of sunshine, so will this fiery boy open his way to the profession of medicine. It is a saying as old as the first book of Thucydides, that he is the greatest man who is educated in the greatest difficulties; of the truth of which there are many striking examples—witness Franklin, Rittenhouse, and Bowditch; Linnæus, Priestley, and Faraday.\*

I have mentioned the beginning of the sixteenth year as the proper time for the educated man to begin the study of medicine. This early beginning to learn the business of life has many advantages. If the student become cold and indifferent to the profession

\* “Πολυ τε διαφέρειν ου δει νομιζειν ανθρωπον ανθρωπον, κρατιστον δε ειναι οστις εν τοις αναγκαιοτατοις Παιδευεται.”—*Thucyd.* L. i. 84.



after a year or two's application, he can leave it for some other business, the progress he has made remaining a bright and useful ornament through all his subsequent years. But the great gain from an early beginning is, that youth is the time to adapt either body or mind to the business of life. It was facetiously reported of Dr. Johnson, in his old age, that he was taking lessons in dancing, in order to the acquiring of some corporeal flexibility, fitting him for the more polite society into which he had been lately introduced. Now, the man who has not been led early into the chambers of sickness, will find himself as awkward in administering to the sick as the huge lexicographer would have been in dancing a minuet. Rush, Physick, and Wistar began medicine in their sixteenth year, and the elegant Dorsey graduated when only eighteen and a half years old. In a valedictory which Dr. Wistar delivered to the graduating class in 1811, I well remember that he strongly recommended an early application to the study, giving as a reason that the student would then acquire a readiness in using the implements of his art, which might be unattainable in later years. Now is the time, moreover, to impress the mind with the peculiar physiognomy of many diseases; therefore the student should be brought to the bedside of the sick as soon as possible; he should bleed, draw teeth, shave heads, give medicines, apply bandages, perform all the little offices of a nurse, remain all night and learn vigilance; he should witness colics, spasms, convulsions, and deaths. If he unfortunately find, after a year or two, that he has no taste for these medical dramas, he can quit them for something more suited to his mind; the progress now made, as above said, remaining a bright and useful ornament, a pearl of inestimable value, a prophylactic against quackery all his remaining life.

By making this early beginning, he will be able to graduate in his nineteenth, twentieth, or twenty-first year, according to his maturity of mind. Length of active medical life is so much needed, that I would gladly prefix even so little as one or two years to that of every physician. Gibbon calls the morning *the sacred portion of the day*, because it is most propitious to study; in like manner, *the morning of life is sacred*, for then good professional habits are most easily rooted, and indelible knowledge most easily acquired.

Suppose, then, that our student, at whatever age either fortune or misfortune has brought him forward, is now about to enter on

the study of medicine, in what manner think you he ought to proceed? I would say, let him begin at the beginning, which seems to be the most approved practice in learning everything but medicine. Let him go at once to the lectures on chemistry and anatomy, obstinately excluding all others. The old stupid business of reading six to twelve months before hearing lectures on these elements of our science, is still recommended and generally practised. I abhor this method; it is trying to read without having learned to spell; time wasted, rubbed away, as the Greeks used to say, χρόνος διετρημμενος. But if lectures are for the present unattainable, if the young man must begin his studies in the spring or when there are no lectures, let him apply himself to the study of the skeleton; and, in order that he may understand his books, let his preceptor be quick in teaching him, by necrotomy, the structure and uses of the various tissues that concern or impress the bones. If he has no human body at hand, all this can be done by dissecting an animal.

Thus the student is taught, in a single morning, the general uses of fossæ, foramina, tuberosities, and everything referred to in the books of osteology. By the sacrifice of another animal, he may afterwards be taught so much of the general structure of the viscera and their tissues, that he may read something on general anatomy and physiology, provided some new books should be written for such students. During this time he may learn something of the sensible properties of medicines, with the manual operations of the apothecary. He may also spend much time in performing various offices for the sick, and he may learn the whole art of bandaging. For this purpose he can procure some idle fellow, who will find pleasure in being bandaged all over every day, for a small compensation. Thus our future surgeon will be endowed with a facility of applying bandages and splints, that will speak volumes in his praise, when he comes to use them in practice. I once saw a professor of surgery showing his class the application of Desault's long splint, and he was so little versed in the routine, that, after extending the limb, he tied up the splints laterally before applying the chaff-bags. I need not say that he found it a hard task to stuff them into their place. Perfection in every department is made up of little things; for want of attention to these, I have known learned and influential physicians to appear wholly ridiculous in



the eyes of those who were greatly their inferiors. Life is a series of little things, let no one neglect them; for whoever is unfaithful in these, will fail in the greater. In war, which is a magnificent thing, shaking great empires to their centre, the Count De Saxe says, there are many puerile observances, *il y a beaucoup de puérilités dans la guerre*. It is the continual industry of a little thing that raises reefs from the depths of the ocean, to wreck our ships and drown our people.

We have now found employment for our student during the summer, without his reading one word of what he cannot understand; now let us consider him as attending lectures on anatomy and chemistry. These demonstrative branches cannot be too carefully taught; they should be impressed by repetition, so that the dullest student may not remain ignorant. If the brightest, therefore, seem to lose time, and become importunate, let them be told that these are ideas which are ever too ready to fade away; that hence they cannot be impressed too carefully. Let them be told that Newton took in geometry too easily and quickly, that hence he censured himself in subsequent years for not having studied Euclid with more attention, before going on to the higher branches.\* There should be lectures on anatomy and chemistry every day, they ought to be rehearsed very frequently, and the incipient student ought to be debarred from all other lectures the first year. That renowned voyager, Mr. Gulliver, informs us that among the many visionaries he found in the Academy of Lagado, some were inventing a method of calcining ice into gunpowder; others were trying to extract sunbeams from cucumbers; one famous professor proposed to build houses by beginning at the roof and working downward, as do those sagacious animals, the bee and the spider. Now, for professors of medicine, surgery, physiology, obstetrics, materia medica, to admit young men into their classes who have not learned anatomy and chemistry, is to imitate the professor of Lagado, and truly to build a castle in the air. The students hear what they cannot understand, and they go away disheartened and dissatisfied.

This attending of only two lectures a day will afford time for dissection, a department of instruction that is sadly neglected.

\* Brewster's Life of Newton, chap. i. or ii.

Of the students that flock to our Philadelphia schools, what proportion, I would ask, attend to it? Can you answer more than one in four? Pray then, how and when are all the rest to learn anatomy and the use of the knife? To attend faithfully to anatomy and chemistry, will afford ample employment during the first course, for the student must now be instructed so thoroughly in these important branches, that he may read on them during the summer. Opportunities may occur during the recess of attending to necrotomy and to morbid anatomy; but chemistry is completely in his power. A portable apparatus may be procured for a trifle, and thus he will have a delightful resource of instructive amusement, when mind or body may call for refreshment. Dr. Priestley began the learning of chemistry at the age of thirty-six, as a relaxation from severer studies; as such he continued it to the end of his days—with what success, all the world must know.

Another important reason for this early and faithful study of anatomy and chemistry, is to be found in the fact, that these most important branches are greatly neglected in subsequent years and vanish from the mind, leaving a fatal vacuity that nothing has any tendency to fill. In chemistry, moreover, the progress of the physician ought to keep pace with the progress of the science; otherwise, he will soon be left in darkness and despair, or as Bunyan says, “in the slough of despond.” The young men now rising up around him, will speak a language he does not understand, and he will find himself a stranger in his own land among his brethren. All this destitution and despair may be prevented by thorough instruction in early life, provided the young physician procure that little apparatus above mentioned, and devote a very small portion of his leisure to the progress of the science. His mind has become a chemical laboratory, or rather a peptic apparatus, which will habitually digest the mental food that may be obtruded upon it during much of his remaining life.

Our student then comes the second winter, well prepared for lectures on every branch; and though he may find it hard to digest all the heterogeneous matter that he must take in, he will yet not sicken with the dose. His sound learning is the true peptic principle, and just in proportion to the amount of this learning will be the vigor of his present digestion. One thing may be safely predicted of him—he has not, like the professor of Lagado, built



castles in the air, nor like the foolish man, has he built his house on sand, but on a rock that will not soon crumble away. He has not, like Newton, as above mentioned, passed over the elements too hastily, he has not muddled his brain with many things imperfectly studied, he has not acquired those "general ideas" which I reprobated a few minutes ago, he has not depraved his mind by a habit of superficial study; but he has brought with him an intellect well drilled in the acquisition of clear, and bright, and adequate ideas, all which he can communicate by speech or by writing.

The demonstrative parts of all the branches ought to be repeated and impressed with the same care; therefore, let the professors beware of spending time in lecturing upon what can be far better learned from books. Lecturing was the invention of early times when books were hard to be procured, it was continued in a barbarous age when teachers gloried in the forming of sects and in the number of their adherents. Reading has many advantages over lectures. It may be done at any time when the mind is excitable; if you do not understand a passage through any sudden abstraction of mind, through the inherent difficulty of the subject, or the cloudiness of the writer, you can read it again; but in the lecture the professor goes on, and while you are thinking about what you have lost, you lose also what he is saying. When reading, you can stop and think; not so in the lecture, for you must take in, if possible, all that comes, and then go home to ruminate, as do a certain family of animals—with this sad difference, however, that what the brute has taken in, is now forthcoming, while much of your mental food has been dissolved in the air.

By omitting to teach a portion of that mighty farrago, which is more easily learned from books, you have time for the more effectual teaching of those portions that require demonstration. Much, too, of the demonstrative parts may be omitted, for what can be more out of place than a grave professor's teaching the art of making laudanum, paregoric, and other tinctures, thus wasting the precious days of winter in things more easily learned at home? Let him extend his lectures in pharmaceutical chemistry, with repeated demonstrations, so as to fill up his stipulated hours.

On the various therapeutic branches, we have many excellent works to which the student may be referred by the professors of medicine, surgery, obstetrics, and the diseases of women and child-

ren. Dr. Rush used to say very often—"for the history of this disease, I refer you to books, and will now give you only my own observations." If our professors would thus refer more or less to books in the non-demonstrative parts, a great amount of time would be saved, and the student's mind would not be sorely oppressed—he would get the habit of thorough study, and would not abuse his intellect with the custom of those "general ideas" already mentioned. The books referred to, might be read through the summer, and frequently as the student would have an opportunity of seeing the diseases on which he would read. Having a case of sickness before him, he would study with avidity; there is now, as Pope says, "a craving void left aching in the breast." There has been a great outcry among our exuberantly learned men, about the want of courses on pathology, general therapeutics, and hygiene. These men have read how Cæsar used to dictate to six amanuenses at once, and they presume that if the student has only a third part of Cæsar's mind, he can hear two lectures at once. But truly these chairs are utterly unnecessary—they all belong to the practical chairs of medicine, surgery, and obstetrics; and if the professors would refer to books in the manner I have mentioned, there would be ample time for teaching them all.

Three eminent men reported to the *American Medical Association* (See Vol. II. p. 367), that "there is not a course at present delivered in the schools, in which subjects of importance are not omitted, slurred over, or superficially treated from lack of time." To the omission I do not object, but the slurring and the superficiality cannot be too strongly reprobated. Let the professor refer to some judicious treatises, telling the class to read them at home, for in them they may be examined; this would not be slurring or superficiality.

But an opinion would appear to prevail among teachers, that it is obligatory on them to go through a full course of instruction in the various therapeutic branches. Those three eminent men just quoted, say in the same report (p. 368), "that a well-digested plan of lectures embraces all that is to be known and taught." This we take to be a lamentable error, involving many absurdities and mischievous evils. It occupies much of that fleeting and precious time that might be devoted to the demonstrative branches which cannot or will not, by most persons, be learned at home; it must



interfere with dissection ; it must often involve the professor in the folly of teaching what he does not himself understand. I once heard a very good man tell his class, when entering on malignant intermittents, that he did not understand his subject; that if he made any errors he hoped the students would correct him. Professors may often say the same of many diseases; but what can be more unsatisfactory than a teacher's depicting a disease he has never seen, and giving his advice in the cure, when he has had no experience? As well might an artist pretend to paint a likeness from your mere description of the face and countenance. The reader who is an expert in the disease thus painted from books, sees at once the failure, and condemns the whole as a fiction or caricature. Did Hippocrates, or Sydenham, or Huxham, ever write concerning diseases they had never seen? Celsus was one of those general compilers, and hence there is much of dullness and stupidity in his polished composition.

But you will object to my notions because they involve the necessity of three courses of lectures; of this I am well aware. I am not writing, however, for the present period, but in anticipation of better days, which are not far distant, when no one will be permitted to graduate till the end of his third or fourth course. The present exaction of only two winters, makes it necessary for the oppressed student to attend all the lectures during both years; an insupportable burden that ought to be utterly condemned and frowned out of use, as inconsistent with health of body and vigor of mind. Hospitals, they say, are to be attended, dissection must not be neglected, grinding-clubs are to be frequented. Never was the old maxim more appropriate, that all work and no play, makes Jack a dull boy. It is like nailing geese before a fire, and stuffing them till their livers swell, in order to the making of fat-liver-pie, the *paté de fois gras*. If our students' brains are not equally diseased, it is because they have rejected some of the superabundant stuffing.

In the Convention of 1846, the Committee on Medical Education brought forward a bill of fare for the professors and students, which ought to have saddened their hearts, or have made their hair stand on end, or their voices, as Virgil says, to stick in their throats. They proposed six professors, and that each should deliver one hundred and fifty lectures through the space of six

months. This arrangement, allowing for holidays, would require six lectures every day, besides the attending of hospitals, dissections, and grinding-clubs. The bill was passed, but some members called arithmetic to their aid during the night, and they got it repealed the following day. But cramming the brain is the rage of the times, so that a little girl at a fashionable school, can hardly carry all the books that daily use requires. In Rome, they had a little servant, *vernula*, to follow young master, and carry his school-baggage; the same will shortly be needed in Philadelphia, for the acquisition of those "*general ideas*" we spoke of above presupposes the use of many books.

I know it is impossible to require three courses at present, but that is a short-sighted and a mere brute mind that cannot look to futurity and to better times. I told you that I would merely throw out some *hints*, hoping they would excite some excogitations that might remain with you till times are favorable to a change. But if the schools in this great metropolis of medical education, would even now require three courses, though their benches might be thinned for a short time, they would soon be filled by the more intelligent and ambitious students. If any one think otherwise, he entertains a lower estimate of young men than they deserve. Much has been written to prove that the courses ought to be lengthened to six months, but hardly a word has been said of requiring a third course. In old times, when we were examined behind a curtain, with the whole posse of dreaded professors before it, Dr. Rush used to say, they always recognized at once the student of three courses.

Some time and labor may be saved to the busy student and professor, by dropping the old custom of each teacher's delivering an introductory lecture. One appropriate discourse would be of more value than the whole seven; or rather it would prove a probable good instead of seven positive evils. Instead of wasting a whole week, as well as some health and strength, in a mere flourish of trumpets, let one animating lecture be delivered on some popular subject, which the youngest and weakest of the class may easily comprehend. Let the professor remember that a large part of his audience have never heard a lecture, that many of them have never applied themselves seriously to any study; that, consequently, they will retire from his lecture on any abstruse subject totally



broken in spirit. I have heard and read introductory discourses which none but a professor in the department could understand. To lecture thus to a class, many of whom had never heard the subject before, was about as wise as to begin Euclid at the middle. The history of the science to be taught was a favorite introductory theme, many years ago; now it would require but an infinitesimal quantum of common sense to perceive, that the history cannot be understood till the science is learned, and that hence it ought to be the last lecture of the course. Let there be one introductory discourse each year, on some highly interesting subject, which may be intelligible to the weakest in the class; look into the volume of introductions by Dr. Rush, and you will find them all agreeable to this opinion.

I am well aware that what I have just said will not find an echo in every head, since there are teachers so elevated above the common ranks of humanity that they cannot descend to the level of students so as to perceive their wants; hence I have seen an introductory lecture on an abstruse subject, wherein the learned author openly acknowledges that it is only the intelligent part of the class who will understand him; but he hopes the weaker portion will be filled with the ambition of scrambling (this is his own word) to supply the deficiency they will now most happily be made to feel. This is truly a very hard beginning, seeming to show that the excellent author had never studied anything himself, but had come into the world like Minerva, with all his wisdom provided. The professor should make his beginning easy and attractive, remembering how the Indians, confounded by the novelties of a great city, cried out: "Too much houses, too much people, too much everything."

As soon as the young doctor has obtained his degree, *self-education* begins. He is now his own teacher, and it is devoutly to be wished that he may not, as Dr. Cullen used to say, have a fool for his master. He is now at a period of life in which young men are very apt to ape the follies and vices of the fashionable world, the worst of which is the drinking of wine. It often happens that this fascinating beverage, this devil, as Shakspeare calls it, is obtruded upon young men by those whose opinions they cannot modestly resist.

To him who tempts young men "to season their palates" with this, or with alcohol in any form, it may truly be said, as Newton

cried out to his dog: "O Diamond, Diamond, little dost thou know the evil thou hast done." A single glass, under the authority of a predominant mind, may ruin the man for life, and bring down his parents' gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. Gentlemen, I have seen more of this evil, as I hope, than any of you. I have known parents and guardians tempt their children to drink, contrary to my earnest remonstrances and my perpetual example, which they despised; and I saw those hapless young men, from two to five in families, dead of drunkenness, and finally buried by their misguided parents in dishonorable graves.

It has been cunningly argued that young men must be accustomed to wine, in order that they may learn by times to resist temptation. The same thing may be said of introducing them to the moderate use of any other vice that polished society admits of. Take early care that your son is made familiar with gambling, lest this accomplishment should break upon him in riper years, a fascinating novelty, like the lock and key in the mind of the Indian king. Tell him to go freely into the most seductive temptations, and there to pray devoutly, as our *Pater Noster* teaches, to be delivered from evil. Quote to him Hamlet's advice on these occasions:—

"Refrain to-night,  
And that shall lend a kind of easiness  
To the next abstinence; the next more easy."

Assure him, then, that by his early and frequent custom of resisting temptation he may become impreguably virtuous.

Now, I appeal to all men, both good and bad, whether this does not contravene, both in letter and spirit, the divine prayer: *lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*. Is it not a fact that after a man has carefully shunned the contaminating vices that beset him, he is still exposed to many, and these sufficient to exercise and strengthen his powers of resistance? In teaching your son to swim, do not throw him into the mountain torrent, lest he be swept away by the turbid stream.

It has been argued that it is equally disgraceful to gormandize and to drink; but pray what comparison can be made between the evils that drunkenness and gluttony severally lead to? Does a full stomach cause theft and arson, fratricide and parricide, with every other form of moral evil that afflicts the earth? Ask the



records of our courts, the reports of grand-juries, the newspapers ; ask the jails and the hangmen. Did Alexander murder his bosom-friend, his foster-brother, the savior of his life at the Granicus, because he had eaten too much dinner ? Ask the many miserable wives and children : are you so poor because your husbands and fathers gormandized ?

But we are told that the drinking of wine is necessary to the man who would pass through the world as a finished gentleman, and that he must be accustomed to it, so that he can drink the companionable quantity. This argument is as old as Cyrus the Younger. This accomplished villain boasted that he could drink more than his brother, and this was one of his reasons why he was better fitted to fill the throne. Such insensibility to wine is the envied accomplishment of many young men in the present age. Now, let me ask, is there a man in the world so insane that he would marry a daughter or sister to any one thus rendered insensible to wine, like Mithridates to his own poison ?

Wine has been very foolishly called "the milk of old age." This is a glaring absurdity ; there is no similitude between the two articles in their effects on the body. Milk is a nutriment ; wine is a fire that wastes the oil of life. It was forbidden to the Jewish priests during all the time they were in the tabernacle, and engaged in the service of the altar ; we do not find that even the old and feeble were indulged with this "milk of old age." A physician's tabernacle is the whole extent of his practice ; and we cannot help thinking that if Moses had made laws for the doctors, he would have vetoed their wine.

Of him to whom much is given, much will be required ; hence it is the business of physicians, above all other men, to guard the portals of drunkenness, and to beware lest they seduce others to enter. Dr. Fothergill felt the pangs of remorse in his old age for having made drunkards even among ladies of rank, by prescribing wine and spirituous tinctures ; and the voice of the good Dr. Ferriar may now be heard, as it were from heaven, in these monitory words : "The lives of many \* \* \* have been at once shortened and embittered by the thoughtless encouragement which some practitioners give to the use of spirituous liquors. I have seen most melancholy instances in which habits of dram-drinking have been thus acquired, under the sanction of the medical attendant,

by persons not only temperate, but originally delicate in their moral habits.”\*

But, gentlemen, drinking has become so much the practice of the low and the vicious, that just in proportion as society becomes refined it will gradually come into contempt. Hasten, then, the happy day; set your servants and the vulgar a good example; let them have no reason for reproaching you as an authority for their drinking, and therefore the cause of their many calamities. Could you peep through a window on a large Wistar party of negroes, enjoying the bounties of Providence, without one drop of wine, would you not honor them? would not your eyes overflow with tears of joy? And should you see them guzzling wine like ourselves, would you not go away sorrowful, feeling convicted of having taught them a pernicious practice? I pity the man who cannot answer these questions in the affirmative.

Let the young doctor be careful to cultivate his taste in letters, and to increase his literary apparatus. *In this department, no effort, however small, will be lost.* That which relates to his profession ought to be his first and principal care. Let him, then, in the course of his reading, make himself master of technical terms, and their etymology, with their true pronounciation. In my time, we learned from professors themselves more errors in pronouncing than some of us have yet corrected. They have no doubt passed to the rising generation, and they may thus go down to posterity. We were accustomed to hear *ābdōmen*, *mediāstinum*, *intēstinum*, *duōdēnum*; the *Materia Medica* afforded *arbūtus*, *cōnīcūm*, *ūrtica*, *ālbūmen*, *bitūmen*, *ālūmen*; Botany taught us *solanēæ*, *columnifēræ*, and all the numerous *ææ* and *feræ*, with the same quantity.†

Now, this is by no means an unimportant consideration, for false quantity in classical words will always bring the speaker's literature into suspicion. The Greeks and Romans were so fastidious on this point that they hissed an actor off the stage who violated quantity. If any people could dare to alter a language, it is the poets; but see how faithful are all the Greeks and Romans in

\* On the Conversion of Diseases, vol. ii.

† I have seen a catalogue of these errors, taken from the mouths of professors within the last ten years, by a student of superior talents and learning, probity and honor, who is now a member of this Society. It is a very ugly and formidable document.



preserving their quantity. Horace mispronounces only a single word in all his works, and this, says Bentley, "has ever since hung heavy on his manes."\* What think you, then, of the provost in a great medical school—he is now dead—whom I lately saw holding the parchment with which he was consecrating the graduating class, calling it *membrana sigillo rata*, and, in the ablative case, *diplomâte*?

Let the young doctor do his very utmost in acquiring a habit of writing with *perspicuity, propriety, and precision*. Let him seek no other ornament, for medical language is, like Thomson's loveliness, "when unadorned, adorned the most." No merit will make amends for the want of perspicuity. I can show whole paragraphs in our American books which have no meaning whatever, being similar in this respect to those verbose letters that Queen Elizabeth used to write when she had predetermined to say nothing. Medical diction ought to use as few words as possible, thus going the shortest way to the end of a thought. An English writer on morbid poisons, wishing to describe the daily progress of the variculous pustule, uses the following verbosity: "You receive, from a long distance, from Dublin or from Edinburgh, a lancet, on the point of which there is a little dry animal matter. This lancet has pricked the pustule of a patient suffering with smallpox, and the contents of the pustule have been suffered to dry on the lancet. Now with this lancet you make a single puncture in the arm of a healthy person, not previously defended by vaccination or otherwise, and what results?"

Now suppose this author, Dr. Simon, had wished to describe also the effect of a rattlesnake's bite, he might have begun thus: You receive from a long distance, from Utah or California, a rattlesnake, which Linnæus calls *crotalus*, it may be the species *horridus* or *durissus*; this dreadful animal has a sacculus of poison at the root of each fang, and when he bites these sacculi pour forth their deadly contents along a groove in each fang. Now you permit this animal to bite a horse, for an experiment, or perhaps it bites one of you, and what results? In this multiplication of useless verbiage, a great amount of time is wasted without any compensation.

\* "Sterilisve diu *palus* aptaque remis."—*Ars Poetica*, 65.

In a celebrated medical journal, we have this circuitous way of saying, that a certain medicine was probably useful in rheumatism; the disease was cured in eleven days; "and lemon-juice, if it was not the principal remedy, certainly exerted an important influence toward the production of that end." What, think you, gentlemen, of *producing*, or *leading forward* an end or a cure? One might suppose that the writer was a cobbler, and that he was talking about the *producing* or the *pulling forward* of his waxed-end. And then he has lemon-juice *making an exertion, and exerting an influence*.\*

Why should a writer say, "I had recourse to a medicine," if he had not previously used it in the same disease? This word means a running backward. The simple English word *to give*, is often supplanted by the Latin word *to exhibit*; that is, to make a show of the medicine. A shopkeeper *exhibits* his goods, a physician *gives* or *orders* his medicine. Celsus took nearly all his ideas from the Greeks, but he did not copy their words. I believe he never uses the word *exhibere*, but *dare et uti*. Sometimes he says *adhibere*, but this does not mean *to make a show*; moreover, it is pure Latin. His own language was sufficient for him, except in the mere naming of diseases; and hence one reason that his style and manner are universally approved.

It is of no little importance that our young author should not practice the coining of words. A new idea may require a new word, but old ideas will always be most intelligibly introduced by known terms; hence the great English lexicographer, whose head might well be fancied as swarming with words, introduced only four in all his writings. His rule was, "to admit only such as may supply real deficiencies, such as are readily adopted by the genius of our tongue, and incorporate easily with our native idiom."† If a little license be granted, how will you define its limits? How will you definitely measure the old vulgar phrase *too much*? A little liberty will prove like moderate drinking, and lead to intemperance. If every writer of the present times should coin words at his pleasure, and the next generation should adopt them and add to them, what odious gibberish would then fill the

\* Amer. Journ. Med. Sci. Oct. 1852, p. 402.

† Pref. to Dict.



air ! It is told of Sir John Mandeville that, when far in northern Asia, with his retinue, their words were all frozen before they could be heard, and that, on coming south, they were suddenly thawed, and filled the air with their liberated voices. I can hardly credit this fact, as the amiable author does not relate it himself, and yet something similar may happen to the jargon of the present generation ; while confined to books, it may pass without much notice, but our successors may find the accumulated vocabulary to become a clattering of unmeaning voices, the mere echoes of our vanity, and as unintelligible as Sir John's thawed vocables.

In the *Trans. of the Am. Med. Assoc.* you may find some animating specimens of these important additions to our deficient language. *Numerism, socialism, sensationalism, subjectivity, progressionist, therapeutication, truths eliminated, annexes of the heart.* A writer in vol. iv. p. 59, calls impressions "*intuitively felt relations,*" and then inquires, "Are not all the felt relations based on immediacy and intuition, not on representational and transmitted impressions." Truly, if men in high places continue to pour forth such floods of impurity, men in low places may well complain ; hence I have ventured to notice the subject ; it pertains to *self-education*, which is our present topic. *says Dr. J. C.*

But the great business of the young doctor's life is to study the interminable book of nature in health, sickness, and death ; hence his first object ought to be a frequent visiting of the sick. Let him not run away to Europe, but rather let him apply his learning to the more simple diseases of his own country, to those which he hopes to treat all the days of his life. Though he may thus see a less variety, he will certainly see more than he can faithfully study. After he has practised some years, and acquired some fixed and definite knowledge, he may visit foreign countries with some advantage. As the fortune of getting into a hospital can happen to few, he must seek for patients among the poor, laboring day and night among them. Their diseases are generally more simple than those of the luxurious and idle, hence they are better adapted to his inexperienced mind. Their doors will be open to him night and day, so that he can visit them more frequently than he can the rich ; they will give him a hearty welcome at any hour, from sunrise to sunrise again. Let him be careful to conduct himself with the same punctilious respect that he would show to his equals. *X*

This is required not only by morality, and by all the obligations of a gentleman, but by mere selfishness also; for if he indulge here in a careless bearing, this will become habitual, and he will carry it with him among his superiors; unless, indeed, he be a great actor, or what is etymologically and essentially the same thing, a hypocrite. But the poor are entitled to our respect, for it is only God who knows whether they are not better than their doctor. They are entitled to our gratitude also, for they are the humble steps to higher ranks and to a lucrative practice. If we find them sometimes troublesome and presumptuous, let us take this as a trial of our patience and of our power of resisting temptation, as preparatory to the same trials in the higher walks of life. Remember that the poor have many grievous burdens to bear, of which the rich can form no just estimation. A lady of high rank, walking with Napoleon in St. Helena, reproved her porter sharply for crossing her path; the great man said to her, in the kindest manner, "Madam, have regard to the burden." Let our young doctor have regard to *the burdens of the poor*, and consider whether, if he were in their place, he would conduct himself better than they. I have descanted a little on this subject, because it pertains to self-education, and because he that neglects it will find, to his sorrow, that he has indeed had a fool for his master.

The next thing I would propose in the way of self-education is, that our young man should devote his whole time to his profession for a few years, avoiding all distracting business and studies. Dr. Rush advises the young country physician to settle on a farm. I am sorry the great man uttered this mouthful of folly. Two or three patients dangerously ill, and the gathering of a harvest in a rainy season, are utterly incompatible in a doctor's head. The Ethics of the *American Medical Association* condemn this mongrel business in these words: "Patients should prefer a physician who is not devoted to any pursuit incompatible with his professional obligations." When our art was comparatively very short, Hippocrates called it long. What degree of comparison could he use at the present time? The greatest mind is limited and cannot boast of ubiquity in medicine. When Bonaparte was told of the disaster in Trafalgar Bay, he petulantly said: "I cannot be everywhere;" but this answer will not be tolerated in a physician whose patient dies while he is absent on his farm or busy with alien



studies. The greatest men have found their minds to lose by excessive distraction. Dr. Priestley was so much engaged by a variety of studies, that in the short space of a fortnight he forgot a manuscript he had laboriously prepared for the press; he then composed another on the same subject, and sent it to the printer. When he accidentally discovered the first manuscript—he looked upon it, he tells us, with terror, thinking that his memory was impaired.\* To the same purpose Dr. Rush relates that Leibnitz called upon the famous John Hudde, hoping to be highly entertained in conversing with him on the subject of his studies in conic sections; the mathematician brought forth his manuscript, saying with a sigh, that he had forgotten it all upon being made Burgomaster of Amsterdam.†

This might prove a lesson to physicians who meddle with politics; but, look into the *Boston Med. and Surg. Journal* for June 23, 1852, and you will find this notable paragraph: "The present Governor of Maine is a physician, and not only is the Governor of New Hampshire a medical practitioner, but the speaker of the House of Representatives is also one, as well as two of the executive council, besides others in elevated places. The mayors of several cities in the South, hail from the same working ranks." In the mother country, too, the physicians meddle with offices. Professor Wood relates, in his Introductory Lecture of 1848, that an eminent surgeon of Bath, that year President of the Provincial Medical Association, was Mayor of the city; and farther he relates, that on taking an introductory card to a physician in "one of the chief cities of England," he found him acting as mayor of the city, and as a practitioner of medicine. Now, gentlemen, far from us be such honors as these. They may sometimes be useful and even necessary, by putting money in both pockets; but they will prove to be Hippomenes's golden apples, and the physician, turning aside to pick them up, may lose his professional race. These dislocated men "constitute that disease in society which is known in the body by the name of *error loci*; they are red blood in serous vessels, bile in the stomach, and aliment in the wind-pipe."

It is true there are men of great powers who astonish us with

\* Autobiography.

† Rush on the Mind.

their many versatilities; but even the greatest have found their limits. Haller was so devoted to his physiology and natural history that he was considered as a very unsuccessful practitioner; and the great Linnæus was filled with vexation, because he was not patronized in his medical career. In this the people judged rightly, for he was so abstracted by his love of nature, that he could not prove a skilful practitioner of the long Hippocratic art. In his letters to Mr. Pennant, he represents himself as dancing for joy over a certain shell, not seen, as he says, by any mortal before. Concerning this *cochlea*, he writes: "I am continually thinking; I talk of it by day and I dream of it by night." Yet this great man had the folly to complain that he was neglected as a physician. Had he danced for joy over the cure of his patients, had he talked of *them* by day and dreamed of *them* by night, he might not have been afflicted with disappointed hope.\*

I have heard of a physician who was brought into favorable notice by his relations' running about the town predicating of him that he was a perfect enthusiast in medicine; that he was wholly absorbed by it; that he had no time for society, so abstracted was he by his medical books. It was reasonable that a man of whom such things were said and believed, should obtain public favor as a physician; but where is there a family in their right senses who would employ a doctor whom his friends represented as wholly distracted with shells and plants? Oh, he has a perfect enthusiasm for nature; Mr. Agassiz sent him a shell *which no mortal ever saw before*; and Mr. Gliddon sent him an ibis from the Nile; *he talks of it by day and he dreams of it by night*. Gentlemen, if you were going abroad on a railroad, would you trust yourselves with a conductor so loving of nature, that his travelling delight consisted in viewing with rapture the forests and mountains, the shaded vales and the shining streams? Would you ride in tranquillity along the perilous mountain declivities, knowing the conductor to be an astronomer, now busy in distinguishing the constellations. Gentlemen, I have had some very profitable experience in relation to this subject; my preceptor was a man of education, commanding talents,

\* ——— pro gaudio exultans quod detexeras concham à nullo mortalium ante visam. \* \* \* \* de hac concha die noctuque cogito; de ea hodie, noctu de ea somnio. Dec. 3, 1756.



pleasing conversation, and noble presence ; his family was respectable, he had relations who might have favored his pretensions, he was desirous of practice, and he occupied the chair of M. Medica in the University ; but he never could command public respect as a physician. All men knew that he would leave a patient for the sake of a flower or a butterfly ; hence they left him, as the people of Upsal did Linnæus, to talk of his idols by day and to dream them over by night. Yet this man, thus utterly unqualified, the trustees had the folly to place in the chair long honored by the great Rush. Strange things will happen when, as Juvenal says, "Fortune has determined to make a joke."

Let the ambitious young doctor not desire the attribution of universal knowledge ; it is only necessary for him to yield the conversation when subjects are introduced of which he is ignorant. I was present when some medical gentlemen were looking over Audubon's plates on zoology, when one of the company threw contempt on the whole collection because the otter showed *twelve* cutting teeth ; he said that no animal in the world had more than *eight*. Now it was not this excellent man's business to know that *twelve* is the principal characteristic of the whole family of *Carnivora* ; nor would any rational man think the worse of his professional abilities, because he did not know that his own cats and dogs had the same number.

Botany, however, is a very important branch which is almost wholly neglected by the American schools. It has a close alliance to medicine in several ways. It will assist the inquirer after indigenous medical plants ; the student will better understand much of the language of books on materia medica ; he will be able to distinguish and describe the plants of which he is speaking or writing ; he can ascertain the scientific names and thus avoid the errors and confusion of vulgar nomenclature. I once called upon a physician who had been educated in a great city ; the conversation falling upon hemlock, he said that he intended going into the woods to collect some. I was surprised at this, not then knowing that it grew in any part of our country ; but I found that he alluded to the *pinus Canadensis* of Linnæus, which has the vulgar appellation, hemlock, the English name of *conium maculatum*.

If the *sexual* method is less beautiful than the *natural*, it has the advantage of being so easy that a competent knowledge may

be soon attained. But there is no leisure in the winter for lectures, and very few students will remain within reach of the schools during the summer, so that opportunity seems to be restricted to a favored few; therefore this beautiful and important science must be left at present to the graduates, as a part of *self-education*.

Our young doctor must now, in the course of his self-tuition, endeavor to keep pace, *as nearly as possible*, with the discoveries and theories of the passing day. If he neglect these even for a few years, they will so far accumulate upon him that he will hardly have courage to attempt, or time to master them. He will feel himself, to use the beautiful comparison of Pope, a disheartened traveller in the Alps, with insurmountable barriers now rising before him. He has reached some of the lofty eminences of learning, which he had hoped were the last to obstruct his happy way :

“ But thus advanced, behold, with strange surprise,  
New distant scenes of endless science rise!  
So pleased at first, the towering Alps we try,  
Mount o’er the vales, and seem to tread the sky;  
The eternal snows appear already past,  
And the first clouds and mountains seem the last.  
But, these attained, we tremble to survey  
The growing labors of the lengthened way;  
The increasing prospect tires our wandering eyes,  
Hills peep o’er hills, and Alps on Alps arise.”

Such will be the astonishment of him who contemplates mountains of science before him, which he has neither courage to attempt, nor space of life to surmount; when, at the same time, he sees the more diligent companions of his early travel now in the full enjoyment of those far-distant happy heights, which he can see and envy, but can never reach. *He sees Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom.*

We shall now take leave of our graduate, by insisting that he shall join a county or district society, and thus put himself under the government of his peers in the republic of medicine. He will thus give up a portion of his time, and also of his liberty, for the protection and friendship which the collective profession will undoubtedly afford him. It is very fortunate for us in Pennsylvania, that our county societies compose the State Society, for by this truly republican system these two bodies go on harmoniously in the government of individuals, and in promoting the commonwealth of medicine in our State. I could say much on this fruitful subject,



but my time is exhausted: my paper is too long, and yet I have merely given you some *hints* on some important points.

Gentlemen, in accordance with the constitution of our Society, I shall not again have the honor of addressing you from this chair. I thank you kindly for the preference you have given me during the last four years; nor shall I ever think of it without grateful recollections. 'Tis certain, I ought to have done more for the advancement of the Association; and this fault of neglect, as Bacon calls his crimes, I must now add to the long catalogue that weighs heavier on me than I hope yours will ever weigh upon you. A great man says that it is melancholy to look back and contemplate how little we have done in comparison with what it was in our power to do. In the present case, however, it is a consolation to know that what I have neglected must have been faithfully done by you, for the Society has prospered beyond expectation. Above all, let us congratulate together that nothing has occurred to disturb our harmony, and that no one comes into this hall without having reason to know that he is meeting his friends and brothers. When I left Philadelphia in 1813, there was a melancholy want of cordiality among many of our best men; but on my return, after 25 years, nothing struck me more forcibly than the universal good feeling and benevolent intercourse of the medical profession. It seemed to me that physicians were never so happy as on meeting each other. In my annual discourse of last year, I told you that I considered them as the best body of men on the earth; I tell you so now, and I hope to carry this opinion with me to the future world. Still, we labor under many imperfections, like all things human, and these it is our own business to correct individually. One of the chief means and helps to this end, will be found in faithfulness to the business of medical societies; a second consists in promoting the cause of medical education, morality, and religion among ourselves, so that we may be profitable companions to each other in our perilous voyage through the ocean of life.

When the pious Tasso found that he had not many months to live, he desired to be carried to the Convent of St. Onofrio, that, in the society of those benevolent monks, he might there begin his conversations in heaven. This was not a mere poetic rapture, but the sober thought of a dying man, from which all men may derive instruction, and physicians above all others; for there is something

like a spirit of divinity, *numen divinum*, pervading their business and alliances, which ought, in the language of the good Swedenborg, to bring down heaven to the earth, and to give them what Tasso sought, a foretaste of future felicity. For, when their affections are purified, and raised above the irritations of exorbitant selfishness, they will find, in their public associations and their mutual works of benevolence, that overflowing of charity without which no man can be happy, whether in the earth or the heavens. Let our members, then, be diligent in the work before them, now so prosperous; let them be faithful in attending the meetings of the Society, and earnest in receiving and communicating knowledge; for there is not a man among us so wise and good that he may not go away both wiser and better, provided he bring with him a patient and an accommodating mind. We meet as friends, neighbors, and brothers; the time may come when it will be said of us, as it was of the ancient Christians—see how these physicians love each other.





